

Valentin Villatoro

I am a faculty member in the Medical Laboratory Science program at the University of Alberta. I am passionate about education as well as the advancement and promotion of the medical laboratory profession. Medical laboratory professionals play a key role in the provision of health services, despite being largely unknown to the general public and even other health professionals. I believe one of the most important ways to change this is to volunteer and engage with professional bodies, such as the CSMLS.

What is your involvement with the CSMLS Research and Special Initiatives Department?

As a representative of the University of Alberta, I have partnered with the CSMLS to work together on a Choosing Wisely Canada project. The collaboration aims to explore the medical laboratory profession’s participation in initiatives to reduce unnecessary laboratory testing and procedures. We hope to engage with experts in the field to develop a top-five list of unnecessary tests or procedures to help guide the practice of medical laboratory professionals and other health professionals involved in the laboratory testing process. We also hope to learn more about medical laboratory professionals’ awareness and engagement with Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations.

Why do you value your partnership and project(s) with CSMLS?

The CSMLS represents the voice of the profession on a national level. It is an honour to partner with the CSMLS to be a part of its mission to advance the medical laboratory profession. I know that the value I place in my partnership with the organization goes both ways, as I have felt supported and empowered by the CSMLS in the work we have accomplished so far. We are building momentum and starting to see the fruits of our labour, which only motivates us to continue our work. I am inspired by the medical laboratory professionals that have joined our project and look forward to making further connections with like-minded individuals across the country, which would not be possible without the support of the CSMLS.

How will your project(s) help the medical laboratory profession?

I believe our project will enable the long-overdue involvement of medical laboratory professionals in the conversation around appropriate laboratory utilization. The fact that medical laboratory professionals are impacted by a large proportion of Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations yet have not added their voice to this initiative is something we are seeking to change. At the same time, we are having rich discussions around scope of practice, the laboratory’s role in stewardship of resources and our ethical duty to prevent patient harm. These are conversations that laboratory professionals need to be having in their place of work, and we hope our project is just the beginning.